

2022

Partner Conference 2022 Bosnia and Herzegovina

Documentation

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

3rd October – 7th October 2022



Table of contents

1	Introduction and background	2
1.1	Greetings from the Program Steering Committee and Representative of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development / BMZ	4
1.2	Program schedule of the partner conference	7
1.3	Conference fact table	9
2	Results on the topics introduced by the Program Steering Committee	10
2.1	Feedback from participants on the following information topics	10
2.1.1	News from the weltwärts program	10
2.1.2	Challenges, consequences and solutions of the Covid-19 pandemic for the weltwärts program	11
2.2	Results on cross-cutting issues	13
2.2.1	What expectations do the partners have of the volunteer program?	13
2.2.1.1	North-South Program	13
2.2.1.2	South-North Program	13
2.2.1.3	Diversity	14
2.2.1.4	Networking in and in-between partner countries	14
2.2.1.5	The participants would like to continue working more deeply on the following topics	14
2.2.2	Which topics from the conference are important for the further development of the program and will be taken back to the Program Steering Committee?	15
2.2.2.1	History, peacebuilding and peacekeeping in the Balkans	15
2.2.2.2	Mr. Stinsky, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo	18
2.2.2.3	Mr. Schmidt, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo	19
2.2.2.4	Workshop “Monumenti”: The changing face of history and memory	20
2.2.2.5	Valuation of the visits, involving regional stakeholders	22
2.2.2.6	Competence Center Bezev - inclusion in the weltwärts program	23
2.2.2.7	Challenges and best practices in the weltwärts program	24
2.2.2.8	SOGIESC in the Balkan region and the weltwärts program	29
2.2.2.9	Network for the Balkans	30
2.2.2.10	Guidelines for volunteers in the South-North program	30
2.2.2.11	Publicity	31
3	Individual part	32
3.1	Workshop “LOVE-storm”- together against hate online	32
3.2	Takeaway of the participants	33
4	Enclosures	35

4.1	List of abbreviations	35
5	Imprint	36

1 Introduction and background

This was the first regional partner conference in southeastern Europe since the weltwärts program was founded. Since 2008, around 400 volunteers have been sent to the region and over 50 South-North volunteers from these countries have been hosted in Germany.

Even before the pandemic, the organization Initiative Christians for Europe (ICE) and its cooperation partner, the Archdiocesan Center for Youth Pastoral "John Paul II." (Nadbiskupijski centar za pastoral mladih "Ivan Pavao II.") had decided to organize a partner conference.



© Initiative Christians for Europe e.V.: A participant takes a picture of the partner conference welcome flipchart.

Initiative Christians for Europe wants to open young people's eyes to the needs of their fellow human beings through its international voluntary services, encourage them to act humanely and to show solidarity and, above all, make them more immune to indoctrination and violence. With its international educational work, ICE stands up for human dignity and human rights. Young people practice cross-border solidarity and thus contribute to securing lasting peace.

The Archdiocesan Youth Center John Paul II (NCM) has existed since 2007 as a place for young people to meet and exchange ideas. With more than 40 different activity groups and opportunities, the center is characterized by its intercultural and interreligious openness. As a youth culture and meeting center, the NCM occupies an important position as a mediator for openness, peace and youth work in multi-ethnic Sarajevo. The NCM has been accepting international volunteers in various formats for over 10 years.

With a variety of suggestions for volunteering in various activities, it makes a valuable contribution to extracurricular youth education in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the time of the conference, in times of the hoped-for outcome of the coronavirus pandemic, the world is in a state of shock and outrage: after months of border maneuvers, Russian military troops attacked Ukraine. Large Ukrainian cities have been under constant fire for months, and more than 14 million people are fleeing Ukraine. The escalation and effects of this war are currently not foreseeable and will change the geopolitical and geostrategic orientation of the continent for decades to come. The Balkans are already being affected by these developments and will have to face up to these challenges as well.

This first partner conference can make a contribution to strengthening civil society and cross-border engagement in Southeast Europe and promoting development policy cooperation between this region and Germany.

The practice-oriented learning field of international voluntary services, as made possible by the weltwärts program with its North-South and South-North components, should not be underestimated in its effect on young people and our society. The voluntary services and their partner structures contribute to a sustainable and more peaceful future. They enrich non-profit organizations that align their work with the real needs and often with the hardships of the local people as well. The sending and partner organizations and the other actors of the “weltwärts joint operation” share the responsibility for the implementation, quality and further development of the services.

Many thanks to all participants and to those who made this partner conference possible! We look forward to the many positive impulses and as many more positive voluntary service experiences as possible that this conference will bring about.

Gebhard Ruess

Chairman of ICE and Deputy Member of the weltwärts Program Steering Committee

1.1 Greetings from the Program Steering Committee and Representative of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development / BMZ

Dear representatives of our partner organizations, dear representatives of our German implementing organizations, dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) I am very pleased to warmly welcome you to this partner conference in Sarajevo.

It is the first ever weltwärts program partner conference to be held in and for the region of Southeast and Eastern Europe! Moreover, after Mexico and Columbia, it is the third partner conference this year following the long break due to the pandemic.

My name is Christine de Barros Said and I'm the responsible desk officer for the weltwärts program at the Ministry. I am also delighted to attend this partner conference in Sarajevo – a city and region that I know well from previous activities, and that I truly cherish.

More than two years have passed since the weltwärts program was massively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. We had to abruptly stop the weltwärts program in March 2020, and repatriate over 3170 volunteers worldwide to Germany. At the same time, there were more than 500 South-North volunteers in Germany who, in turn, faced other challenges caused by the pandemic.

After the complex repatriation campaign in spring 2020, our efforts as a ministry were directed at retaining the program's structures. At that time, no one could have foreseen how things would develop worldwide. It was and remains very clear that weltwärts thrives on the diversity and commitment of its participating organizations and actors. That's why we used every option at our disposal to support the civil society structures both in Germany and the partner countries, because weltwärts is realized via your experience and networks in Germany and in the partner countries. Together we sought and found ways to retain significant structures by means of temporary solutions. We have also succeeded in finally returning to regular operation for the current 2022/23 cohort.

Where are we, where is weltwärts after two years of the pandemic? How are our local partners doing? How can an international volunteer service cope after, and with, a disruption like the coronavirus?

What new and acute challenges will weltwärts face – especially in this region – in the light of Russia's attack on Ukraine? After the peaceful changes in the Eastern European countries in the 1990s, this region, and in particular this city of Sarajevo, have suffered

so much under a series of wars amongst the former Yugoslav countries from 1991-1999! You, your parents and grandparents know what it means to live under war conditions. And that is the reason why peace education and peace keeping is and remains a special topic in this region.

What are the other long-term, strategic issues that we must not overlook – such as climate change, environmental protection and ecological sustainability? These are all important aspects for young people, which those involved in the weltwärts program want to and must discuss.

This conference is focused on you, the partner organizations from Southeast and Eastern Europe, and on your questions and concerns. It acts as your forum to exchange ideas about your experiences and your expectations related to the program.

Moreover, there are good news, too: since summer 2022, more than 2000 volunteers from Germany have already departed to over 40 countries and around 400 further departures are planned. The German implementers are looking forward to increased applications from the next cohort. The number of volunteers in Germany for the South-North component had continuously increased prior to the pandemic. The outbreak of coronavirus had a less severe impact than in the North-South component. More than 800 entries are registered for the current cohort. Of these, there are already over 600 volunteers who have commenced their service in Germany. In addition, there is another important information for all those involved in the South-North component: in July, our ministry increased the maximum funding rate for the new 2023/24 cohort to compensate for pandemic- and inflation-related cost increases. It is mainly you we have to thank for the fact that more than 2,500 young people are already able to provide weltwärts voluntary service again after a global disruption like the coronavirus, and all the challenges that came with it. It is you, the receiving and sending organizations, who empower civil society and breathe life into international cooperation through the greatest personal commitment. Thank you so much!

My thanks and recognition are also extended to all weltwärts volunteers. For them, weltwärts represents a big, brave stride into the world, because weltwärts brings us together, and together we progress. Therefore, my heartfelt gratitude also goes out to all current and former weltwärts volunteers who commit themselves in their places of assignment, in the program, the sending organizations or beyond, to promote international cooperation.

I believe that the strength of our collaboration for weltwärts once again became particularly evident in the pandemic: the shared responsibility among you as civil society organizations and the BMZ and Engagement Global on behalf of the government. Despite all the difficulties, I hope we can see our experience of the pandemic as an opportunity

and use weltwärts to share that with the world, because international cooperation and joint commitment will always be required: the war in Ukraine and the climate crisis are just two current examples that motivate young people in particular.

So, once again: thank you for being part of weltwärts! Thank you for your commitment that makes weltwärts possible and better every day!

On that note, I wish you and us a successful partner conference here in Sarajevo, and I look forward to exchanging ideas with you!

Christine de Barros Said

BMZ – weltwärts Program Officer and PSC Coordination

The members of the weltwärts Program Steering Committee (PSC)



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Christine de Barros Said at the greeting.



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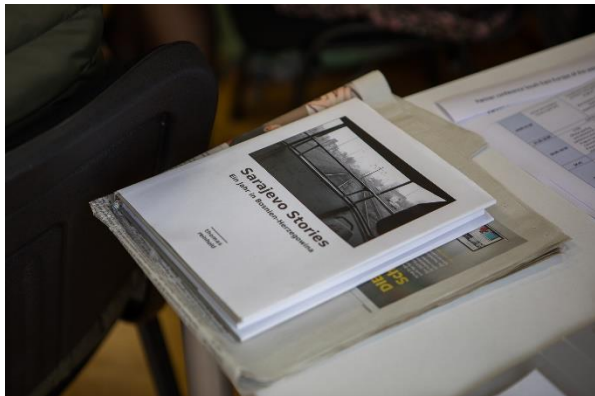
Gebhard Ruess at the greeting.

1.2 Program schedule of the partner conference

The conference took place all day from October 3 to October 7, 2022 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The program was prepared beforehand by the organizing team. The topics of the participants were checked in advance and taken into account in the program. The organizing team decided to focus on the issue of peace building in the Balkans on the 3rd day with an excursion to the city of Sarajevo with various stops.

Monday, 03.10.2022	Tuesday, 04.10.2022	Wednesday, 05.10.2022	Thursday, 06.10.2022	Friday, 07.10.2022
	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
Arrival and reception	PSC topic 1: basic information and news of the weltwärts program	War in Ukraine and its impact on South East Europe, young people and the weltwärts program	Cultural reflection of the visit to Sarajevo PSC topic 2: Impact of the corona pandemic on the weltwärts program	Summary and results Evaluation and feedback
	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break
	“Gallery Walk” participants present their organization and connect	Peace building & peace keeping on the Balkans, part I: Mr. Stinsky, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo	Workshops by participants: 1. Peace education in the Western Balkans 2. LGBT+ in the ww program 3. Practice of inclusion in the weltwärts program 4. Love-Storm: hate speech on the internet	Certificates Closing words by the PSC and conference team 11:30 End of program
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Arrival and reception Corona rapid tests	Competence Center Bezev: „Inclusion in the weltwärts program“ Best practices and exchange on the implementation of the weltwärts program	Visit off the organization NARKO-NE Peace building & peace keeping on the Balkans, part II: Visit of the War Childhood Museum „Little Jerusalem“ Orthodox Church,	Mr. Schmidt, High Representative of the United Nations, Sarajevo Reflection on the visits of Mr. Petke, Mr. Stinsky and Mr. Schmidt	Departure
	Coffee break		Coffee break	

Official opening and welcome by conference team and Program Steering Committee (PSC) Presentation of the conference program	Best practices and exchange of experiences on the implementation of the weltwärts program	Cathedral and Mosque Time to visit the centre of Sarajevo individually	Open space
Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
The weltwärts program: structure & roles Introduction to the historical and political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mr. Petke, Konrad Adenauer Foundation)	Free evening parallel: reimbursement of travel and test costs	Dinner at a traditional restaurant in the center of Sarajevo	Cultural music night



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A book titled "Sarajevo Stories" written by Thomas Reinhold.



1.3 Conference fact table

Venue of the conference: country and city	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo
Hosting organization(s)	Initiative Christians for Europe e.V.
Partner organization(s)	Youth Center John Paul II (NCM)
Date of the conference	3.-7.10.2022
Total number of participants	21
Number of participants from the following countries	3 participants from Albania 5 participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina 9 participants from Germany 2 participants from North Macedonia 2 participants from Serbia
Ratio men/women	9 men and 12 women
Conference language/s	English
Main topics	Political situation, peace building and peace keeping in Bosnia and Herzegovina, challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, basic information and news on weltwärts, best practices in the weltwärts program, topics and workshops of the participants



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The facilitator duo Sabina Smajić and Max Engl (photo left) and the organization team with current volunteers at the facility (photo right).

2 Results on the topics introduced by the Program Steering Committee

2.1 Feedback from participants on the following information topics

The Program Steering Committee introduced two topics to the conference program. These topics are described in detail in Chapters 2.1.1 and 2.1.2.

2.1.1 News from the weltwärts program

On the second day of the conference, Mrs. Christine de Barros Said (Representative of the Program Steering Committee) presented the news from the weltwärts program with basic information related to weltwärts. To do this, she used a PowerPoint presentation (see enclosure). Many participants had a high demand for information because they had not yet taken part in a ww partner conference. The participants now have a deeper understanding of the structures and objectives of the program and know what opportunities the program offers. This resulted in a lively exchange and many questions were asked.

Important points, which were mentioned:

- All German organizations need a certification based on the catalogue of quality requirements. One participant from Bosnia and Herzegovina asked if it is possible to receive a certificate as a volunteer organization and what is necessary in order to receive it. One participant explained that the certification has to be done in cooperation with the German partner organization.
- If you are part of the weltwärts program, you can get training and workshops on the topic of quality requirements. This depends on the German sending organization.
- One aim of the partner conferences is to empower the partners in the different regions to communicate better among themselves.

Citing the rules of procedure for the Programme Steering Committee (PSC):

- “a representative group of partner organisations (at least 10) can put forward items for the agenda. These should be addressed to the coordinators.”
- Besides, partner organisations (also a single one) from abroad can inform the PSC about concerns/a topic. The contact person is: Lourens de Jong (lourens.de.jong@ventao.org). Ideally, this should be done not later than three weeks before the PSC-meeting.

- Before each PSC-meeting, a translated agenda (English, Spanish, and French) is sent to the networks of the German organisations, which should pass it on to their partner organisations. Similarly, after the PSC-meeting, a short protocol (translated into English, Spanish, and French) is being send to the German networks to share it with the partner organisations.
- Further, a very brief summary of the PSC results is part of each partner newsletter (to which you can subscribe here: [Newsletter subscription - weltwärts \[EN\]](#)).

There was a profound interest in the weltwärts website, so Christine de Barros Said gave an introduction to it, especially concerning the following subjects: newsletter; South-North; accompanying measures for additional activities with partner organizations; information on how to become a partner; document center; flyer on sexualized violence.

2.1.2 Challenges, consequences and solutions of the Covid-19 pandemic for the weltwärts program

The PSC wanted to receive feedback from the partners about the Covid-19 pandemic, to find out what challenges participating representatives are dealing with at the present moment. It was also interesting do discuss the development of suitable solutions. The PSC is collecting all the feedback from the partner conferences and will evaluate it by the end of 2022.

The Method “1 – 2 – 4 – all” ensures that the voices of all participants are heard and taken into account and that they all have the opportunity to suggest solutions.

Chart from the presentation explaining the "1-2-4-all" method.



The PSC had two questions on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the weltwärts program:

A.) What are the current challenges PC participants are facing with regard to the implementation of the program?

- Albania, Serbia and BiH: financial problems: many donors are re-directing funding to mitigation and prevention, causing job losses
- Rising costs of living as a consequence of the pandemic causing financial hardships
- Less foreign volunteers due to being scared of the health systems
- Additional bureaucratic hurdles
- Discontinuation of usual practices (e.g rented apartments are not needed because volunteers are not coming; tasks that volunteers are helping with need to be filled by local staff).

B.) Future perspective: What solutions do the participants of the partner conference see in terms of the challenges described above?

- Proposition of risk management funding for the organization, for taking care of the extra costs caused by covid infections
- Preparation and consciousness of emergency cases, crisis management teams in the hosting organization and/or contact persons in the countries that can be contacted in case of crisis
- Adjustment of funds; funding needs to rise in order to cope with the rising living costs and mentoring costs
- Effort and time needed to mentor a volunteer exceed the funding for a mentor, so these fundings need to increase too
- Concepts to deal with Covid-19 in the hosting organization
- Encourage and tell volunteers how to buy cheaper food.



The funding will probably not increase, thus, more funding for the single volunteer leads to a decreasing number of volunteers in total.

Christine de Barros Said (PSC)

2.2 Results on cross-cutting issues

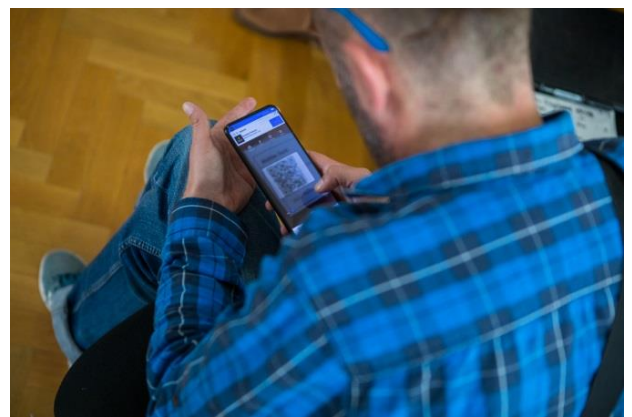
2.2.1 What expectations do the partners have of the volunteer program?

The participants were very engaged to get to know the weltwärts program. There was a continuous exchange and dialogue between the participants and the PSC members.

There were many questions about the financing and about getting to know the program more deeply, especially in terms of what costs are covered by the program. There is a big need for transparency in terms of what is financed and on how that is done in the program. Therefore, there is a recommendation for more transparency, to give more introductions in finances when the PSC presents the program.



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The facilitator collects topics from participants.



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Participant fills out the evaluation form.

2.2.1.1 North-South Program

The partner organizations need more preparation for better implementation of the program, like crisis management and instructions on how to deal with sexual violence. An idea is to offer workshops from the German organizations and the quality associations. The introduction to the website of weltwärts was of great help. The partners felt the need to be better informed about the skills and the attitudes required for a successful voluntary service in the hosting organizations.

Once again, the feedback of the participants was that the current amount of money is not sufficient anymore to finance volunteers abroad.

2.2.1.2 South-North Program

There was a lot of interest amongst the South partners to get to know the program and to create regional networks. The partners would like to increase the number of volunteers. They also wish to have a list of sending organizations in their countries.

The requirements for volunteers are reasonably high, for example two languages, 40 hours in a working week and high independence in daily life. For such requirements, there is a need for more financial support and a need for structures to select and accordingly prepare the volunteers in their countries. Participants asked why there is no German assignment place at the conference. There is a necessity to have this stakeholder at the conference, to have this perspective as well and to develop a common understanding of what is needed for the preparation of the volunteers. The partner organizations would also prefer to have direct contact with the hosting place.

Unfortunately, there were no examples of South-North reverse management in the Balkans. There seems to be little structure here. There is also a lack of financing in the development of the returnee's activities in the partner countries.

There was a small group working on guidelines for volunteers in the South-North program. There is a need for improving the preparation and accompaniment of volunteers. It would be helpful to involve the ex-volunteers in preparing and supporting the new volunteers, like translating during the application process and helping volunteers with doctor appointments.



There is a power imbalance and funding imbalance in the selection between hosting and sending organizations in the South-North program.

Statement of a German participant

2.2.1.3 Diversity

The participants were very interested in the issue of inclusion. A recommendation would be to help queer volunteers to find access to the queer communities. A request by Christine de Barros Said (PSC) is to share stories of queer volunteers on the website of the program.

2.2.1.4 Networking in and in-between partner countries

There is a big interest in creating networks in the region. The partners asked for a list of all partner NGO's inside the countries and regions, for the purpose of networking within these areas.

2.2.1.5 The participants would like to continue working more deeply on the following topics

- Gender equality in multicultural contexts
- Racism and post-colonialisation
- Connection of young people with nature and environmental protection

- Building connections through joint projects of the volunteers
- Inclusion and empowerment
- Peace education
- Hate speech in social media
- In group/out group mechanisms/social norms
- Collective mental health

2.2.2 Which topics from the conference are important for the further development of the program and will be taken back to the Program Steering Committee?

As a conference team, we have debriefed the content of the conference and have filtered out the topics of the conference that are relevant to us and that could be important for the Program Steering Committee.

2.2.2.1 History, peacebuilding and peacekeeping in the Balkans

As a conference team, we decided to focus on peace building and peace keeping in the Balkans. For this topic, we planned a reflection on how the Ukrainian war is influencing the countries of the participants. It got clear, that for many participants from the Balkans, at the moment, the war does not have such a big importance. The biggest change is noticed in the high inflation. Therefore, the money they receive for accommodation is less worth and so it gets more difficult to implement the weltwärts program in those countries. Other consequences are, that there will be financial cuts and that there are no participants from Ukraine or Moldavia.



The inflation, the Ukrainian war and geopolitical changes are affecting the volunteers as well. The financial means for accommodation that were sufficient one year ago are not sufficient anymore.

Participant from Bosnia and Herzegovina, receiving organization

As a group, we visited the Bosnian-Herzegovinian organization “NarkoNe” which also takes part in the weltwärts program. Its aim is fighting addiction and counselling young people in Sarajevo. At the office of the organization in Sarajevo, the group experienced a warm welcome. Some members of the team gave a small presentation of their important work.



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Azra Halilović presents her organization Association for Addiction Prevention NARKO-NE.

After that, we visited the “War Childhood Museum” in Sarajevo. The Museum impressed the group with its items of children who lived in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war, telling stories as part of history. All participants were very touched by these testimonies. Some participants used, for example, the same toys in their childhood as the children of Bosnia and Hezegovina during the war.



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Exhibit at the „War Childhood Museum“.



© Initiative Christians for Europe e.V.
Dismay at the „War Childhood Museum“.

The encounter of religions plays an important role in the Balkans. Therefore, we visited different religious places as the Orthodox Church (Cathedral Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos), the Catholic Church (the Sacred Heart Cathedral) and the Mosque (Ghazi Husrev-beg's Mosque) in the old center of Sarajevo. The Catholic Church was rebuilt after the war with donations from, among others, the Bishopric of Aachen. A unique master's program, recognized among Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox Christians, sensitizes its graduates to interreligious dialogue. Overall, it seems, however, that there are rather few approaches to dialogue between religions and denominations.



© Initiative Christians for Europe e.V.
Participants visiting the Orthodox church...



© Initiative Christians for Europe e.V.
... and the Mosque in Sarajevo.

During the conference, we also gave space to three different speakers and regional stakeholders about the political and historical situation in Bosnia Herzegovina and the Balkans.

2.2.2.1.1 Mr. Sven Petke, Konrad Adenauer Foundation: introduction to the historical and political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Sven Petke is the director of the office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He presented the foundation and his impressions about the historical impacts and the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina on Monday evening.

Mr. Petke started with the presentation of the work of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in the Balkans (Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) and its tasks. He talked about sponsorship programmes, working together with religious communities in the Balkans and their representatives, which is critical for a political foundation, balancing the work among different ethnic groups e.g. by organizing discussions with war veterans, and working with the different political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Petke thinks that, in public, people insufficiently talk about the last 40 years of common history. According to Mr. Petke, a clear 'no' to fighting again still cannot be heard from the veterans of the three ethnic groups. Bosnia and Herzegovina has the lowest birth rate. Few people are born and many go abroad. His view on the current elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina: These were the ninth parliamentary elections and the eighth presidential elections. Around 7,000 people from 72 parties ran for office. 3.3 million people were allowed to vote and 50% voted. For the first time, a woman was elected member of the Presidency. She is the representative of the Serbs from the SNSD (Serbian political party). This Serbian party wants to dissolve Bosnia as a state. In the Serbian entity, a very nationalist party won. Their candidate has said that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country where it is evident that Muslims and Christians cannot live together. Anyway,

the elections show that people voted for a change. Mr. Petke describes that people are tired of war and that the possibility of a new war is small. The German impression of BiH constantly being at the brink of war is simply wrong. About joining the EU, he thinks that it might be hard. The missing rule of law and the missing impartiality of the courts is the problem. There are high levels of corruption and there are no punishments for it. Without the rule of law, there is no way into the EU. Demography is BiH's main enemy, standing in the way of change.

2.2.2.2 Mr. Stinsky, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo

Mr. Stinsky is from the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo. He presented the Embassy and their field of projects in the region on Wednesday, 5th October.

Mr. Stinsky reflected on the main issues in the region. Migration is a big problem. People from BiH leave the country because they are trying to find a better-paid job and there is frustration with the inability to make changes. There are also problems with digitalisation. German investments in BiH are focused on renewable energy (for example “Windparks”). The effect of the Ukrainian war in Bosnia Herzegovina is mainly inflation (17.6 %) and it is bringing back memories of the war in BiH. More activities of the Embassy are related to financing small projects directly and giving young people perspectives to stay in the country.



Things are not changing for the better. There is a great deal of hopelessness and people want more security.

Participant from Serbia



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Three participants from Albania introduce themselves to Mr. Stinsky from the German Embassy.

2.2.2.3 Mr. Schmidt, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo

Mr. Schmidt, High Representative of the United Nations, presented his perspective on the political position and the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina on Thursday, the 6th October 2022. He is the second official from Germany occupying this position, and he was a member of the German Bundestag and a minister during the government under Chancellor Merkel. The UN High Representative was installed in line with the Dayton Agreement, after the end of the Bosnian war. His role as the UN High Representative is an executive and administrative one. Since some time has already passed since Schmidt took on the position, he feels like he has to get more involved.



Left to right: Mr. Schmidt (UN High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina), Gebhard Ruesch (ICE and member of PSC) and Christine de Barros Said (BMZ and member of PSC). Mr. Schmidt says goodbye to Manjola Kamolli from Albania. © Initiative Christians for Europe

Mr. Schmidt held a short introduction speech about the political situation of the country. He explained that the problem of brain drain is ruining the future of the country. After 27 years, the Dayton Agreement should be overthought, since the aim of reconciliation has not really been reached. People have not managed to come to social coherence. The curricular at schools differ according to the three different ethnic groups. Young people are getting different versions of the past and some are not willing to change that. Catholic, Muslim and Orthodox groups are not the best ones to bring young groups together. If the young generations are taught about their own group being the best, they are not going to peacefully live together with other ethnic groups. He suggests to give young people the opportunity to go abroad and come back with these new perspectives.



If the young generations are taught about their own group being the best, they are not going to peacefully live together with other ethnic groups.

Mr. Christian Schmidt, UN High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina

An example of a reconciliation project is Camp Bihać, including the Red Cross and the volunteers working together in assisting the refugees. They see that working together can make a difference, but this is also challenging because young people who are working on their own are under a lot of pressure from others, when working with another group which is not their own. There is also the problem of nepotism and corruption. Mr. Schmidt has a personal connection with the weltwärts volunteer program because his daughter did a volunteering service in Albania.

2.2.2.4 Workshop “Monumenti”: The changing face of history and memory

Michele Parente, working for the Forum Civil Peace Service in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina gave an optional workshop about peace education in the Balkans. He introduced the well-developed material and concept “Monumenti” and how it works with young people. It is a pedagogical tool for the culture of remembrance. The objective is to understand the history of the region, especially in the aspect of different perspectives on war and peace. The word “Monumenti” comes from the verb “monere” which means remind, prevent and warn. He divided the group, who followed 5 steps, in three parts:

Phase 1 - Analyzing pictures: Every group got 3 pictures and was asked to answer the following questions by looking at the pictures. They were asked not to judge while discussing, since it is a process of multiplicity:

- a) How do you think the monument is called?
- b) Where do you think it is located?
- c) Which period do you think the monument refers to?
- d) Which symbols do you identify?
- e) What message does the monument transport?

Phase 2 - Creating context and title: Read the narratives about the monuments, answer the questions and be critical with the information given:

- a) Compare what you saw and thought it is with what you read it is
- b) Write a short description of each monument with key information on it
- c) Give a title to the group of pictures



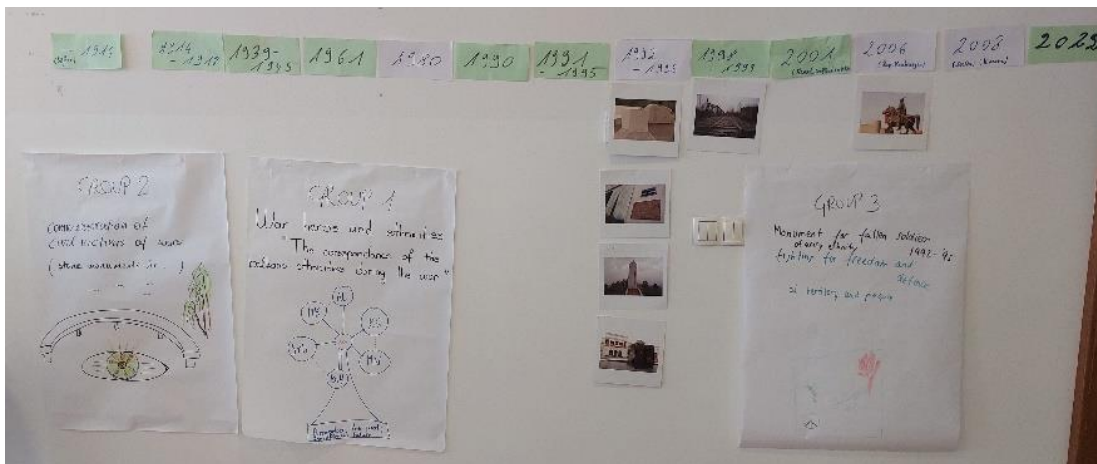
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Workshop Monumenti with Michele Parente.

Phase 3 - Creation: create your own place of remembrance with the title you have created in step 3, paint it on a paper together and present it to the group afterwards.

Phase 4 - Timeline of Remembrance: collecting all Photos and bringing them in a chronological order. Take the pictures and share them with the others: what is it about and where is it? Then decide where on the timeline you want to put it.



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Pin board with the timeline and the self-developed monuments.

Phase 5 - Screening “MonuMENTImotion”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJOZm3M7pkI>

2.2.2.5 Valuation of the visits, involving regional stakeholders

After the visit of the three speakers, the excursion on Wednesday afternoon and the workshop with the focus on peace building and peacekeeping, there was an evaluation discussion with all participants in the plenum. Here it became clear that this thematic focus and the contributions of the external speakers and stakeholders offer both opportunities and challenges.

Opportunities include inviting regional stakeholders such as political foundations, embassies and other political actors to contribute to dialogue and networking. The creation of such points of contact is interesting for regional NGOs. The visit of Mr. Christian Schmidt was particularly appreciated by the participants. Especially for German partner organizations, this topic was very useful in order to deal with the region in depth.

Clarifying the purpose of their speech with the speakers was a challenge. Therefore, it is important, if possible, to have a personal conversation in advance and to clarify what the concern, the target group and the assignment of the speakers actually is. Our recommendation for inviting the German Embassy to a regional conference of weltwärts was to focus on the activities of the Embassy and its strategies in the country.

It is also advisable, if necessary even against the recommendation of the partner organization, not only to invite German (and male) speakers, but also to hear regional and female perspectives. Three political representatives of German nationality were too much German perspective for the participants in this conference. According to a young Serbian participant, the topic of the former war was too much in the focus of the speakers and the conference.



Talking about the war and what happened, again and again, is emphasizing the differences. Working together on other topics is way more effective in building peace and cohesion.

Participant from Serbia



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Seeking for interreligious dialogue: In front of the Catholic Church, Sarajevo.

2.2.2.6 Competence Center Bezev - inclusion in the weltwärts program

Melanie Kroll visited the conference to present the center of excellence focusing on inclusion of people with special needs. With this aim, she held a presentation on the second day of the conference (see attachment). Afterwards she prepared a workshop for the participants who were interested in penetrating deeper into the topic. No organization worked with volunteers with disability in the weltwärts program. Some organizations have experience in inclusion (diversity is normality) and mentioned practical examples working with people who have a disability/an impairment. Melanie presented the dimensions of accessibility: not just ramps, but also for instance informative communication, providing sign language etc. The participants received information about steps which need to be dealt with when a voluntary service wants to be inclusive and in addition they learned about the role weltwärts plays within this and which costs are covered. Melanie showed examples of how to learn more about the volunteers' disabilities/impairments having in mind certain sensitivity. She gave examples of how to communicate impairments, such as undiagnosed mental illnesses. She emphasized repeatedly the importance of faith in the volunteers and an open mind for the challenges. She gave examples of how to spread information about the possibility of going "weltwärts" with an impairment/disability like publicity in schools for children with special needs but also regular schools. The participants were enthusiastic that this financing option existed and understood that the realization of inclusion is a question of will and financial support.



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Melanie Kroll from Bezev presents her organization.



The workshop made me see disability no longer as an exclusion criterion but as an opportunity. That's great!

Participant from Bosnia and Herzegovina

2.2.2.7 Challenges and best practices in the weltwärts program

On the second day of the conference, we had time for an exchange in small groups on challenges and best practices within the volunteer program. Therefore, we worked in six groups focusing on different aspects and phases of the voluntary service.

2.2.2.7.1 Selection and preparation of volunteers

There is a difference of selection processes from country to country and from partner to partner. Similarities of the first step are the open call and individual interviews with applicants. The second step is that the partner organization talks to the receiving organization. There are some differences between sending volunteers to Germany and receiving volunteers from Germany. There was an ex-volunteer from Bosnia and Herzegovina at the conference, who did his voluntary service in Germany. He was able to share a lot of experiences and challenges, especially in the South-North component.

In the South-North Component:

- It is essential to have a partner organization which makes the process easier for both applicants/potential volunteers and recipient organizations of volunteers.
- The best case would be sending volunteers who already have volunteered in the partner organization in their residence country.
- Some partner organizations organize German courses for volunteers and send volunteers with better German language skills than other organizations.
- Participants from Serbia and Albania have the challenge of finding volunteers who have the right motivation. How to test the motivation behind every application and

to ensure that the volunteers are applying because of the program and that they will come back to their countries?

- Selection processes should contain these steps: open call, online presentation for everyone who is interested, interviews with applicants who meet the requirements, and decision-making based on the evaluation during and after the interview (motivation, qualification, language).
- The requirements for volunteers are reasonably high, for example, the knowledge of two languages, up to 42 hours in a working week and high independence in daily life.



Final questions of volunteers need to be answered by the receiving organization and not by the sending organization, because they can give them the actual information from the ground, from the place of assignment, like guidance for the daily life and accommodation. Statement by partner organization in Serbia

In the North-South component:

- Because of the high requirements of visa application forms, it is good to have people who help with the visa applications and it is important to update the current visa requirements.
- Preparing the volunteers to meet a new culture without stereotyping it.
- It is essential to have reliable local partners in administration, contact persons and instruction for new concepts that are new and unusual to volunteers.
- Non-binary persons organized workshops and in the end they were very happy with other people attending their workshops and thankful that they were given the opportunity to organize these events.
- The basis is a good relationship with the volunteers (closeness/distance).
- Having a good matching process: conversations with volunteers to decide where they fit best (it is a mutual decision) and to find a place where they can use their qualifications in the best manner, where a person can provide the best service.
- The volunteering agency should prepare the volunteers for a specific project.
- The final decision should be made by the partner organization in the country.
- Inform the German Embassy in the relevant country about the potential volunteers.



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“Great what you are doing” - participants present their organizations.

2.2.2.7.2 How to accompany volunteers?

The small group, which worked on the accompaniment, compiled the following best practices and challenges:

- The challenges of language skills: An ex-volunteer from BiH stated that one of the difficulties was the German language. He overcame it by learning the language, socializing with mainly Germans and joining a football club where most members were Germans. It did help him to become comfortable in German.
- It is great to have information packages for mentors.
- During the first weeks of orientation in a new surrounding, it is important for the volunteer to have a close accompaniment. As a PO, it is important to offer the volunteers constant contact. This greatly depends on the resources of the mentor and contact person.
- Important principle of subsidiarity: Firstly, volunteers should try to resolve questions on their own. If this is not possible, they can contact their mentor or contact person. If this does not help, contact the sending organization for further information.
- For the volunteers, it can be very helpful to have contact with an ex-volunteer from this place of assignment.
- There are different definitions of the role of a mentor. Therefore, it is important to clarify the notion of “mentor”. There are guidelines for mentors in the program.

2.2.2.7.3 Budgeting and financing

There were many questions about the financing and getting to know the program more deeply, especially concerning what costs are covered by the program. There is a big need for transparency, on what and how much is financed by the program. Therefore, another recommendation would be to offer more transparency, to give more introduction into the

finances of the program, presented by the weltwärts program itself. Once again, it was the feedback of the participants that the money is not sufficient anymore to finance volunteers abroad.

2.2.2.7.4 Crisis management and prevention

In a small group, the participants shared experiences of cases of emergency and in addition to that, the PSC informed them about certain steps they should take in cases of crisis. German organizations need to have a plan on what happens in the case of crisis in the weltwärts program. Potential sources of crisis can be outside events (political crisis, economical crisis and natural hazards), structural sources, people-related events (sexual violence, death of other people), and volunteering-related events (illness, death of volunteer, mental health, quitting the service).

The group collected what to do in which case. In addition to that, Mrs. Christine de Barros Said (PSC) gave her point of view:

- In case a volunteer quits, there are no guidelines by the program. Therefore, the partner organization deals with it.
- In case of sexual violence
 - there is a flyer in the document center on the website of the weltwärts program,
 - quality associations are also offering contact points for volunteers,
 - identify structures within the countries so that sexual violence is indicated to officials in order to be dealt with,
 - a challenge is the need for preparation of the partners abroad in case of sexual abuse and to give advice on how to deal with it,
 - when talking about sexual violence and dealing with these cases, be self-conscious about your qualification and your personal limits.
- In case of illness, there is a 24/7 health insurance and in case of hospitalization you should inform your embassy immediately.
- In case of death of volunteers it is important to inform your embassy (embassy of the sending organization) and only! the embassy informs the family.
- A best practice example for crisis prevention from a mentor from Albania is a short weekly report by the volunteers. Here they say what was challenging during the week and what they liked and what they did not like.

2.2.2.7.5 Return management

In this small group, only German sending organizations were discussing their practices with returnees. Good experiences were made in engaging former volunteers in public relations and social media. In addition to that, an interesting idea is to connect ex-volunteers of the North-South program with volunteers who do their volunteer service in Germany. There is a network of ex-volunteers which is called [PFIF Network](#). The biggest

challenge in this field of work is the financing and question of human resources. Sometimes it happens that volunteers who are coming back to Germany are very critical with the weltwärts program and there was an exchange on how to deal with this critical perspective.



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Participants of the conference introduce themselves.

2.2.2.7.6 Building up partnerships

There was a small group, who worked in the field of cooperation and on the question of how to create good partnerships. Certain partnerships do not involve only the weltwärts program but other organizations and programs as well. There is an organization from BiH that tries to work mainly with local organizations, local partners and capacities and for weltwärts they are the receiving organization. There are similar examples in Serbia, where they have partnerships with different receiving organizations. One important condition for building these partnerships is for them to be compatible with the core values of each organization. The weltwärts program is a state program and there could be an interest to connect with different sending and receiving organizations. The partner organizations should have a common interest to connect with each other. Some participants were wondering if the coordinators of weltwärts know who the partner organizations in the country are, so that interested young people can apply for a voluntary service. Very important and mandatory for a good partnership is good communication. In the best case, this happens face to face and in the native language.



The experience is that we often skip the cultural language peculiarities. We all use English and that can lead to misunderstandings or tension.

Statement of a participant of a German organization

2.2.2.8 SOGIESC in the Balkan region and the weltwärts program

Nikola Planojević from Serbia is working with his organization „Da se zna!“ in the field of defending LGBTIQ+ against discrimination. He offered a workshop and many people were very interested. He clarified certain terms and invited the participants to use “LGBTIQ+” as the common term. The “+” includes the people not mentioned within the other letters, so queer is often used as the equivalent, even though it had been used as a slur in the past. However, there is a process of reclaiming the term. The notion “SOGIESC” is mostly used in the international setting.

In the Balkan region and Ex-Yugoslavian countries, homosexuality was forbidden until the 1990s. Different legislations have different levels of human rights for SOGIESC. Nowadays, discrimination based on these factors is forbidden in all of these countries. Montenegro allows same sex marriage. In Serbia, hate crime is seen as an aggravating circumstance in legal procedures. Society is lacking behind the legal frameworks. The society in general still has the biggest distance to the queer communities, says a study in Serbia. Queer culture flourishes in the bigger cities and there are spaces for the members of the queer communities. More people are outing themselves, but queerness is still seen as a disease, which is being propagated in public television as well. Rural areas are still areas where violent attacks on queer people are common. The speaker explained that the label is necessary in certain contexts, where the queer community faces challenges. There are specific needs of queer people that are not met by society e.g. discrimination through the denial of same sex marriage. The community is not cohesive as such. The men and women who conform to traditional norms are getting less discriminated than those who express traits of the opposite sex. Intersex people are still the least represented within the community, but also within society in general. They are often not recognized within the law and there is still the practice to put these people into the binary system.

A recommendation would be to help queer volunteers to find access to the queer communities. A request by Christine de Barros Said (PSC) is to share stories of queer volunteers on the program website.



The queer community could be a unifying element of the Balkan region, because the queer communities visit each other through the pride parades in the region.

Statement of a participant from Serbia working with LGBTIQ+



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Nikola Planojević from Serbia presents his organization "Da se zna!".

2.2.2.9 Network for the Balkans

On Thursday, we worked in small groups on the specific issues, which the participants had named beforehand. One of the themes was how to continue as a network between the partners in the region, the Ministry of economical and international cooperation and the German partners besides partner conferences. Different ideas were voiced, ranging from online meetings to different trainings for the partners.

2.2.2.10 Guidelines for volunteers in the South-North program

There was a group working on guidelines for volunteers in the South-North program in the open space on Thursday afternoon. There is need for improving the preparation and accompaniment of volunteers. It is helpful to involve the ex-volunteers in preparing and supporting the new volunteers, like translating during the application process and helping volunteers with doctor appointments.



There is a power imbalance and funding imbalance in the selection between hosting and sending organizations in the South-North program.

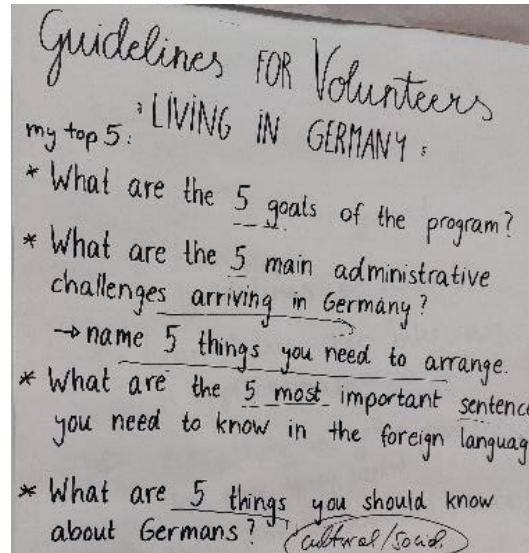
Statement of a German participant

It was also discussed how to cope with knowing about the real motivation for coming to Germany and to offer honesty and an open discussion. There was one participant, who offered to write down guidelines for volunteers, because he learned a lot through the experience as a volunteer in Germany.



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Brainstorming in the working groups.



Toolbox Questions South-North.

2.2.2.11 Publicity

There was another group in the open space on Thursday afternoon, working on publicity. One German participant claimed that they could not reach the target groups, which are the people in the diaspora, through partner organizations.

- An idea was to involve universities and schools in publicity,
- to put the weltwärts website on the three most visited websites in Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- to use social media and youtube channels.
- The 15-year-weltwärts anniversary is next year (2023). There is a possibility to look at the website, where you can share stories from volunteers, partners etc. Send an e-mail to redaktion@weltwaerts.de



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To find a common language through cooperation.

3 Individual part

3.1 Workshop “LOVE-storm”- together against hate online

Inger Dorit Witzenhausen from the organization Friedenskreis Halle e.V. offered a workshop on Thursday about hate speech on the internet, and how to deal with it. At the beginning, there was an exchange of experiences with hate speech, followed by feedback from the participants on how they are dealing with it.



It is part of my job to deal with hateful comments. It is my organization’s daily life.

Statement of a participant from Serbia, working with LGBTIQ+

Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of social media users have experienced hate online according to a study in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Approximately 5% of the users spread these hate messages. Inger showed a short introduction of the “LOVE-storm”- training and learning platform. It also offers the possibility of entering an imaginary chatroom, playing the roles from attacker to audience, to the person who is attacked. At the end, the participants were “playing” this scenario with the imaginary situation of an actress, who outed herself as transgender.



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Inger Dorit Witzenhausen from the organization Friedenskreis Halle e.V. presents her organization.

3.2 Takeaway of the participants

At the end of the conference, the participants collected what they take away from the partner conference for their work:

- Good practices from all of you
- Situation of volunteers
- Connections and networking
- Partner organization idea exchange
- Wonderful time with the participants
- Meeting the UN High Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Personal relation to my partner organizations
- Reconnecting with my partner organization
- The inclusion aspect of the weltwärts program
- Thinking about South-North
- Size of the conference producing a familiar feeling
- Feeling the spirit of the program, working in the international context
- Facing similar challenges and the chance for exchange with others
- Common interests within the groups
- Introduction program

The second question was, what they take away personally and what they want to put into practice:

- Sending volunteers
- Promoting volunteerism
- Finding a partner organization
- Revising the preparation and selection process
- Better structure in the organization, to be better prepared and have info packages for our volunteers
- Advertising the weltwärts program to diaspora groups
- Advertising the podcast
- Focusing on mental health regarding the work load
- Preventing burnout
- Improving arrival of volunteers (visa etc.)
- Learning more about the Balkans
- Concepts to start in new countries for the volunteers
- Writing a report for the Program Steering Committee
- Financial report
- Invite people from the Balkans to Western Europe

- Reading more about the region
- Contribution to social media



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Cultural evening in traditional clothing.



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Weltwärts partner conference: stairway to better partnership.

4 Enclosures

4.1 List of abbreviations

BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
NMC	Archdiocesan Youth Pastoral Center "John Paul II."
PSC	Program Steering Committee
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics
UN	United Nations
ww	weltwärts volunteer program

Please contact the weltwärts coordination office (redaktion.weltwaerts@engagement-global.de) if you would like to see the complete version with further attachments (presentations, photo documentation of the results).

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